

**Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 16, 2010**

Members Present

Sonja	Brown	
Melanie	Hester	
Sally	Hunter	
Nicole	Jimerson	
Shary	Maskel	
Doris	McCain	
Teresa	Mebane	
Linda	Nelson	
Dwight	Pearson	
Jana	Plemmons	
Jill	Scercy	
Kathy	Blankenship	For Joe Sutton
Gloria	Upperman	
Mark	Yost	

Members Absent

Bob	Atwater
Esther	High
Susan	Humbert
Cathy	Kea
Felix	Keyes
Sheila	Knapp
Ann	Maxwell
Lisa	Phillips
Laura	Wiley
Cynthia	Wilson

Visitors

Melissa	Hass
Cynthia	Daniels-Hall
Cora	Darrah
Eric	Hall
Laurie	Jaeger
Teresa	Lewis
Mary	Miller
Brenda	Monforti
Lynn	Rogers
Ellen	Russell
Vicki	Simmons
Joanne	Wise

DPI Staff / Presenters

Fay	Agar
Bobbie	Grammer
Tish	Bynum
Kate	Neale
Mary	Watson
Ira	Wolfe

**Welcome / Review of Agenda**

Sonja Brown, Chairperson, opened the meeting with introductions of members and guests. It was announced that new member, Vicki Simmons, is in attendance today as a visitor and will begin her membership in the position of EC teacher effective July 1, 2010. Also Melanie Hester is replacing Odell Clanton as the LEA representative position on the Council. Chairperson Brown announced this is her last meeting as a member of the Council.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Chairperson Brown advised the Council to review the March meeting minutes. No edits were noted for the meeting minutes. A motion made and seconded to approve meeting minutes as written.

## **Early College High Schools**

Fay Agar, Director of the Early College High School Initiative, was the presenter. In 2003, the Office of the Governor, NC New Schools Project, State Board of Education and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation entered into an alliance to transform secondary schools into academically rigorous institutions capable of graduating all students ready for success in college, career, and life.

Generally, students in Early College are first generation college-going, under-represented and economically disadvantaged youth. The Early College focus is to accelerate student learning, collapsing six years of learning into four or five. Students graduate from high school with a high school diploma and an associate degree or up to two years of college credit. Early Colleges are based on community college campuses.

North Carolina has nearly 70 early colleges. This is one third of the early colleges in the nation. Each local district develops a needs assessment, school plan and communication plan regarding early college. Presentations are made to middle school students including the benefits as well as the draw-backs (no sports teams, band, etc.). Parent presentations are provided at night.

Start up schools must have 100 students at end of first year; 250 when at full capacity with a 400 maximum. Applicants are generally student-elected option. It is a one year commitment for students. Student/teacher ratio is controlled by the local LEA, but the ratio is generally less than a regular high school. The level of support is so intense at early colleges that accommodations almost seem irrelevant. However, IEPs are implemented.

Students take ownership for learning and assume a more responsible role in school culture. All students take a rigorous college preparatory course of study in high school and earn an associates degree and/or up to two years of college credits. Purposeful design puts students at the center of all decision making.

Early data results show great promise. In 2009-10, there were 70 early colleges serving approximately 10,000 students and a 0.7% dropout rate compared to the state average dropout rate of 4.97%.

In 2008-09, early college students took nearly 21,704 college courses earning a grade of "C" or better in 82% of them. Data also shows that early college students out perform their community college peers; ie 75% of early college students earned a "C" or better in community college courses compared to 70% of the general community college population (2008-09).

## **Transition Services**

Bobbie Grammer, Monitoring Consultant for the Policy, Monitoring and Audit Section with the Exceptional Children Division presented on Transition Services.

The purpose of IDEA is to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.

Transition initiative starts early and ends late. “Cradle to college to career” looks at every level and making every step a part of an overall transition. Secondary transition is about getting to life between being in school to the world of work/college. A part of secondary transition is also working with other agencies in community. Good transition planning helps each student fill in details of their life’s goals.

Economically, NC would have seen an additional \$10.8 billion in wages over the students’ lifetimes if the nearly 42,000 high school dropouts from the class of 2008 had earned diplomas instead of dropping out of school. If all the students in NC who are estimated to drop out of school this year earn diplomas instead, NC could save more the \$492 million over the course of those young people’s lifetimes.

Elements of successful transition include, but are not limited to the following:

- Career Awareness
- Community experiences
- Exit exam requirement/high school diploma status
- Inclusion on general education
- Interagency collaboration, especially with Vocational Rehab, Dept. of Social Services
- Occupational courses/career technical education classes
- Paid employment/work experience (Students with work experience are two times more successful at future employment)
- Parental involvement
- Teaching self advocacy, self determination, social skills

Transition planning in NC is required beginning at age 14 and includes the child’s needs, preferences and interests; and course(s) of study (such as advanced placement classes or a vocational education program); then the IEP is developed. Goals should be based on student’s strengths, needs and preferences, as well as interests. Students at the high school level should be attending the IEP Team meetings.

### **Agency Update & Current Legislation**

The PBS acronym used for Positive Behavior Support, can no be used. The Public Broadcasting Services sent DPI an official cease and desist letter. For DPI, the new acronym is PBIS for positive behavior interventions and support. All associated documents have been amended to reflect the change.

Summer institutes begin the last week of July. Most institutes will be held at UNC-G with most local hotels providing lodging at state rates. The registration fee is minimal but the training content is rich, pertinent instruction. There will be three summer institutes with training and re-training OCS teachers. Please check the EC Division website for all institute details.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Conference on Exceptional Children will be November 1 – 3, 2010. NC has been educating EC students since 1950. As a member of the Council, the conference

registration fee may be waived. Travel and lodging expenses will be the responsibility of the Council member.

The EC Division is in the process scaling up initiatives statewide so LEAs may continue capacity building and initiatives. It is Ms. Watson's dream that each LEA will become fluent in all DPI initiatives and best practices. A map of regional support by the EC Division for LEAs was provided. Each region has services from literacy, PBIS, behavior support (formerly Willie M. students) intensive behavior needs, EC regional consultants, monitoring for compliance and technology consultants. Some consultants serve two regions. The EC Division is also providing autism training to LEA teams; 81 LEAs have teams trained in autism.

The NC *Policies* were revised at the June State Board of Education meeting based upon changes to the federal regulations. The items that received the most public comment were: (1) revocation of consent - parents can now revoke consent for services; (2) Child Find - now there is a timeline for an LEA to respond to notification from someone other than an LEA or parent; and (3) LD identification - NC's definition now mirrors federal language.

Occupational Course of Study (OCS) Testing Issues - The US Dept. of Education advised NC that the Occupational Course of Study Curriculum did not closely align with the Standard Course of Study (SCOS). The OCS was revised, approved by the State Board of Education in June and now aligns more closely with SCOS.

The legislature is in discussion about moving the separate schools (Schools for Deaf and Governor Morehead School for the Blind) to DPI and eliminating the Office of Education Services. DPI continues to receive budget cuts from the legislature. All state agencies are learning to do more with fewer resources. The Council wondered about the use of lottery funds that are targeted for education.

### **Acknowledge Years of Services**

A plaque of appreciation was presented to each recipient departing the Council. Mark Yost, from SAS, has served the Council for eight years. Mark epitomizes school/business collaboration. SAS has a 19 year relationship with employing EC students.

Doris McCain is known for her active participation on the Council. Doris has been a special education teacher since 1979. Currently, she is at the Wake County central office. She is an active member of the professional learning team on dropout prevention and has been instrumental in developing training models. Doris also coordinates all the transportation for special education for Wake County. Doris is described as a strong and passionate advocate for students with disabilities.

Sonja Brown, Chair, is also departing the Council. She has provided great administrative leadership for the Council. Sonja is currently a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools. Her principal states Sonja is imminently professional, diligent in her pursuit of success for her students and deeply committed to every child in her classroom.

### **Election of Chairperson / Vice Chairperson**

A motion made and seconded to elect Nicole Jimerson as Council Chairperson. A nomination was made, motion made and seconded to approve Jill Seercy as Council Vice Chairperson.

### **Miscellaneous**

The Council selected December 16 as December meeting date.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.